

We All Need Someone by xllecaightwood

Series: a place for tiny perfect harringrove moments [4]

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Billy Hargrove & Eleven | Jane Hopper Friendship, Billy Hargrove Has a Crush on Steve Harrington, Billy Hargrove Lives, Billy Hargrove Tries to Be a Better Person, Billy likes Steve but isn't good at feelings, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Hopper takes care of Billy, Jim Hopper doesn't die or disappear, M/M, Mutual Pining, Panic Attacks, Post Season 3, Protective Billy Hargrove, Robin Buckley & Steve Harrington Friendship, Robin is the best, Sharing a Bed, Soft Billy Hargrove, Steve Harrington Has Nightmares, Steve Harrington Has PTSD, Steve Harrington Has a Crush on Billy Hargrove, Steve wants to make sure Billy is ok, Supportive Robin Buckley, Terror, slowish burn

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2021-03-12

Updated: 2021-03-12

Packaged: 2022-04-01 13:34:06

Rating: Mature

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Underage

Chapters: 3

Words: 5,597

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

"We all need someone" Robin's words echo through the room. Billy suddenly feels nervous, maybe its because of the way she had looked him dead in the eyes as she spoke. Billy draws his eyes away and to the floor, but he could still feel her eyes on him. She speaks again and Billy's chest tightens.

"Maybe. Just maybe, you need Steve."

or, a six part story of love and boys finding out that the best way to deal with all the terror is to be with one another.

1. 1:20am

The first time it happens, Steve thinks he might be dying. Like really, actually dying. He's at home, it's late. 3am late. And, Steve can't sleep yet again. His fourth night in a row, nightmares and visions overwhelming him. He'd woken up sweating and gripping the sheets one too many times that not sleeping seemed like the better option.

So, here he stands in his kitchen with a glass of water in his hand. He's fucking exhausted and his body hurts like hell. His thoughts are spiralling and that's when it happens.

He thinks too hard about the mind flayer and all the shit that's happened, and suddenly he feels like he's suffocating. He wants to claw at his skin. His breathing is laboured, and suddenly he's gasping.

It feels like all the air in the room has gone and he can't stop the panic that spreads through his body. The glass falls from his hands and shatters across the kitchen tiles. He's spinning and the glass shattering makes him fall back. He curls in on himself as his back hits the fridge, he feels like he's drowning in his own thoughts, in his own head and he can't fucking breath.

Sobs escape his lips as he tries with everything he has to control his breathing to stop himself from panicking like this. And, eventually after what feels like forever, he can breath again. He's rocking back and forth hugging his legs, and he's crying. But he can breath again.

He's scared shitless that night and finds it hard to get himself off the floor. But he does, and yea the next day he feels like he's about to die when he has to go to work but he gets through it. And Robin, she is on his case all day. From the moment he walks through the door.

"Dingus. You're here, I assumed another late clock in." Robin smirks at him, but it's instantly replaced with a look of concern as Steve drags himself into the small staff room in the back. He knows she can't follow him back here, she's the only one in the store. Steve takes a deep breath, collecting himself before heading out behind the cash desk.

“Steve. Are-are you okay? You don’t look so hot?” Robin’s voice is full of concern, she’s next to him now behind the cash desk. Her hand rests on the small of him back, and he’s nodding at her.

“Yea. Yea-I’m good.” He stutters a mess of an answer at her, he knows she isn’t buying it. But she doesn’t pester. She knows that’s not the way to deal with it when Steve seems off.

And she can tell, can read Steve like a book by now. She knows Steve’s fucking exhausted. His eyes are rimmed with dark circles and he’s been more jumpy recently. As if he’s on edge all the time. She’s tried to help, tries her best to make sure he’s okay. But he always brushes her questions off. And, some days he’s fine, normal. But on day’s like this, it just adds to Robin’s concerns.

The day goes slow and Steve spends his whole shift stuck in his head. Thinking about the panic that takes over when he’s alone. How it happens too fucking often these days. That sometimes he gets so mad that he doesn’t even care that he can’t breath. And sometimes on the days that are really bad, he wishes that he would just pass out so he doesn’t have to deal with this shit. He decides that the darkness would be better than the feeling of complete terror.

Steve’s shift ends after what feels like forever and he’s saying goodbye to Robin and heading for the door. Praying that he can just leave and go home.

“Hey! Dingus, you wanna hang out” Robin’s voice echo's over the store, and then she’s standing right next to him. A small smile on her face.

“I-i just kinda want to go home. To-tomorrow? We can hang out tomorrow?”

“Yea. Yea, sure. See you tomorrow” Robin’s reluctant to leave. But, Steve wanders over to his car and Robin watches as he pulls out of his space. He gives her a small wave and then he’s gone. And, yea Robin’s worried.

Steve isn’t long home from his shift at the video store when he get’s the call. He had staggered into his house, the quiet creeping over

him. He stands for a moment in the hallway, wishing he wasn't so alone in this stupid house. And then the phone's ringing and Steve is so startled he jumps back knocking his shoulder off the wall. He winces before making his way over to the phone.

"H-hello?"

"Steve. Steve. You gotta take me to the hospital right now." It's Max and she sounds overwhelmed. Like she's had too much sugar and is on a sugar high overwhelmed.

"What? Why? Is everything ok?"

"It's Billy. He's awake" Steve freezes. Holy shit. Holy fucking shit. Billy's awake.

"Steve. Did you hear what I just said? Now come and get me" With that the phone line goes dead, Steve is frozen for a minute. He can't believe Billy is okay after-holy shit.

Steve after everything, on one of those nights that he sat up too afraid to sleep, made it a promise to himself that he would make sure Billy was okay. Would make sure that if Billy woke up that he was okay, that he knew he wasn't alone feeling that terror. He knew he and Billy had never been friends, but he couldn't bear the thought of anyone else feeling this fucking fear. Even if it was Billy Hargrove. He wanted to do it for Max. For him. Because if he was losing his fucking shit. He couldn't imagine how Billy would feel.

Billy hurts. The first thing he feels in pain. His chest and sides feel like they are on fire. The pain comes in waves and he wants to scream. His eyes open and he takes in the surroundings.

He starts to choke. Something is down his throat. There's beeping and bright lights and suddenly Billy is very aware he's in the hospital. At this point he's all tubes and wires. His vision is still a little blurry and

he can't talk, and he fucking hurts all over.

"Billy?" His name is said with such caution yet such excitement and when Billy glances to his side. It's El, and she looks sad, and he notices a man standing from the seat behind her. And this is all so fucking overwhelming. Billy remembers what he thought was his last moments. He remembers his broken apology to Max, and remembers stopping the mind flayer from killing El.

And he's crying. It hurts and the tubes are still in his throat but he can't stop.

"It's okay kid. You're gonna be okay." It's the man's voice. He's nodding and he's standing over Billy now, a hand resting in his hair, and then he's shouting for a nurse. And, Billy aches and he's terrified. But, he's okay. He thinks he might actually be okay.

"Billy!" Billy hears her voice before he see's her. It's Max. Running so fast through his hospital room door he doesn't think she will stop in time before his bed. But she does. She's crying and she's hugging him before he can even say anything. It hurts so fucking much. But Billy needs it. So he hugs her back, as much as it's killing him he holds her so fucking tight.

"Wow. Max, be careful you don't want to hurt him" It's Steve's, Billy looks up to see him hovering in the doorway before making his way in the room. Max let's Billy go with an apologetic look, and Billy wants to tell her it's okay. But, his voice won't work, his throat is dry and it hurts to breathe. So he shakes his head instead, softly.

"It's good to-to eh-see you awake" Steve is a stuttering mess, and Billy takes note of how exhausted he looks. They stare at each other for a moment and Billy nods. It's weird, not uncomfortable but weird having Steve stand by his hospital bed. He knows he's here for Max, but it also somehow feels like more than that.

A few days pass, Billy's been put on so much pain medication he's disorientated most of the time. It helps the pain, but he can barely keep his thoughts straight. He can talk a bit more now, his throat doesn't feel like it's burning as much anymore. It still hurts to breathe, but it's bearable.

People come and go. Mostly Max and the other kids. El is here a lot under Hoppers supervision. And Joyce, she's come by nearly everyday to make sure Billy knows he's safe. That she understands and she brings Will, and Will chats with Billy, he promises him that he will be fine almost every time he's here, and Will tells him that he's fine after everything that happened. Billy thinks it's nice, he likes the company. Not that he would ever admit that out loud.

The person that shocks Billy the most though, is Steve.

Steve has shown up everyday since Billy has woken up. He had brought Max that day, and then never really left. He doesn't say much and most of the time he sits in the corner and Max is here too.

But Billy does question his presence. Never out loud but he wants to ask why he's hanging around, because they were never friends. Fuck, Billy beat him half to death so why would he be here by his bedside.

Billy wakes suddenly, a strained gasp leaving his lips as he comes to. He's shaking a little, makes all attempts to get his breathing back under control. It all felt so real.

"It felt so fucking real" He whispers softly to himself, the nightmare still clear in his head. He wipes at his sweat that's formed on his forehead.

Suddenly, Billy's uneasily aware of the weight that rests over his feet. Fear spreads through him and he's glancing down to the bottom of

the bed. He jumps a little, there at the bottom of his bed Steve fucking Harrington slept, arms slung over Billy's legs, head resting at the foot of the bed.

Billy relaxes a little, fear being replaced by confusion. Why the fuck was Steve perched at his bedside. Billy glances to the clock, squinting a little to see if the light reflecting meant he could see the time. 1.20am. Why the fuck is Steve still here. Why has no one kicked this idiot out. Billy's confused now and agitated. But, deep down he's also kind of relieved. Relieved someone was here when he woke up. And even deeper down, he's happy it was Steve.

"Harrington" Billy's voice is quiet at first. His throat too dry to carry further. And Steve doesn't even flinch. It's dark in the room, but there's some light coming through the small windows above the door of Billy's room; and he can still feel Steve's arm resting over his legs and weirdly he's starting to not mind the weight of it. Billy sighs, a loud sigh. But, Steve still doesn't move a muscle.

"Steve." Again Billy speaks, a little louder now. But Steve doesn't move, doesn't even stir. So Billy, the best he can, kicks his leg up closest to Steve and Steve jumps up so fast Billy is surprised he doesn't get whiplash.

Steve is pale, his eyes look heavy and when he looks at Billy he kind of looks embarrassed.

"What are you doing here, Harrington?" Steve takes notice of how Billy sounds, he doesn't sound like his usual cocky self. He sounds tired, and he's reserved; he's playing with the itchy hospital sheet that's over him, and his heads resting against the pillows but he's looking down at Steve with heavy eyes.

And, yea Steve knows Billy is probably confused as hell as to why Steve is glued to his bedside. But, he can't seem to find it in himself to leave Billy alone. Because he knows how dark the nightmares can be. And he knows Billy has had a fair few of those. He's sat here everyday for 3 weeks, and the few times Billy has been asleep while Steve's here. He's gasping and stirring and he sounds terrified. Steve adjusts himself in his seat, sitting back and his eyes stare at the bottom of the hospital bed.

“Just here in case you need someone throughout the night” Steve’s voice cracks as he talks, he’s exhausted. Billy can tell.

“You a nurse these days, Harrington; cause that’s their job ‘m sure” And Billy smiles at Steve when he speaks. It’s weird because Steve wanting to be there throughout the night makes Billy’s body feel like it’s on fire; it’s not something he would have ever expected to hear from Steve. But it’s definitely something he wanted to hear; whether he knew he wanted to or not.

“Oh.” And fuck does Billy feel sad when he hears how disappointed Steve sounds. “I can go.” Steve stands as he speaks; if Billy could he would have grabbed him.

“Sit your ass down, Harrington.” Billy clicks his tongue, he doesn’t want Steve to go. Weird, he thinks.

“Stay if you wanna. I don’t mind.” And Billy sounds like he’s telling Steve that he wants him to stay without really saying it. He can see that Steve is shocked he didn’t tell him to hit the road.

Even in the dark room, the only light being the light from the window above the door to the corridors and the small flashing lights from the machines; Billy can still see the wide eyed expression on Steve’s face. He expects Steve to still get his stuff and go. But he doesn’t.

Instead Steve sits again, adjusts himself so he’s leaning back on the chair again and looks up at Billy.

“You okay? Do-do you need anything?” It’s caring and soft, and Billy smiles at Steve, he kind of wishes they were friends before all this crap. That he wasn’t an asshole to Steve. Because Steve making sure he’s okay makes Billy feel like he’s on top of the world.

“Just go back to sleep” Billy is curt, but Steve doesn’t take it to heart. He knows Billy isn’t one for taking help. Steve gets comfy; well as comfy as he can. He puts his head back at the bottom of the bed, he knows he will ache from the position in the morning.

But, he’s nearer to Billy this way. Which is a weird thought process;

because who would think Steve would take a chance to be close to Billy fucking Hargrove.

“Night, Billy” Steve’s voice is so fucking soft when he speaks and Billy wants to curl up in on himself. Steve was gonna be the death of him. Jesus. Billy stays quiet, just for a minute taking in the calm atmosphere that surrounds them both. Billy decides then that he wants this more often. The calm. The peace Steve brings him. The peace he’s had knowing Steve was at his side all these weeks. Something he never thought he could have with Steve.

“Yea. Night.” Billy finally speaks and Steve inhales sharply. He’s content with that. And he lets himself drift off slowly to the sound of Billy breathing only a few feet away from him.

2. "Just talk to me"

Notes for the Chapter:

Okay...

So this has took a life of it's own and I think I'm gonna do 6 chapters instead of 4.

This is a little infill chapter focused on Steve, I've got three more chapters wrote and I'll post them as soon as I can look over and edit them.

-m x

Steve feels like a new man. He's slept like a baby the past couple of nights. Yea, his neck aches and he hasn't been the comfiest. But, he's slept.

He's slept at the foot of Billy's bed for the past three nights; and it's been the best sleep he's had since before all this shit. He likes Billy's company, which is something he never thought he would say. But he does. And he's pretty sure Billy like's the company too.

Most of the days at the hospital are filled with him and Billy's intense bickering; but mostly, it's Steve watching over Billy sleeping. It's the only time Steve has ever seen Billy peaceful; when he's not remembering the terror. It's calming to Steve, on the days he sees him sleep so soundly. It's those days where Steve thinks Billy isn't all that bad. Because, when he wakes, he's kind to Steve, makes conversation and smiles at Steve with a toothy grin; a grin that makes Steve's heart burst. And, it sort of feels like their friends.

"Earth to Steve?" He's looking up to Robin now, she's got a confused look spread across her face. They are currently sitting in the old diner, the plates and glasses from the milkshakes and burgers messily on the table. Robin had made Steve pay; "you owe me these" she had spoken with a laugh. Steve had obliged, a tug of guilt for not seeing his best friend for so long.

“Sorry. I was-was just thinking” He’s snapped from his thoughts, Robin slurping the last drop of her second milkshake.

“Oh yea? Didn’t know that brain of yours was capable of that” Steve sarcastically laughs as Robin smirks. “Seriously, what’s going on in that brain of yours?”

“Just thinking about Billy.” It slips out of his mouth before he can think again about it. Robin’s looking at him, studying him.

“You sure are spending a lot of time up at the hospital with him. Correct me if I’m wrong but you guys weren’t even friends before all this. What’s changed that you wanna be around him so much”

“I-” Steve pauses a moment. What has changed? Yea he wanted to make sure Billy was ok. But, he never expected to be by his side like this.

“I just want to make sure he’s handling this all. It’s hard.” Steve speaks but he can tell his voice is unsure. He knows Robin notices. A small hum leaves her lips, but she’s got that look. That questioning look when she knows something isn’t the whole story.

“Is that really all it is?” She’s careful as she speaks, she doesn’t want to push him too far. She knows by now that doesn’t get her anywhere. So, she’s patient and looks at him with care. Steve’s face looks confused, unsure even. He’s flustered and Robin notices.

“Steve?”

“I-i don’t know. I don’t know if that’s all” He shakes his head, and Robin’s nodding. She doesn’t question him again on it. She leaves it at that and chats about some crap that happened at work instead, about this girl that was “incredibly hot” that came in, and she talks about this movie she saw. Steve’s grateful she drops it. Grateful she didn’t push. Grateful for her.

“Can’t stay away can you?” Billy says. And, usually Steve would

laugh, because they've got this sort of flirty humor. Something Steve doesn't quite understand. But, god, does he like it. But, he doesn't laugh. Because he freaked the fuck out about thirty minutes ago and couldn't stay in his house alone.

He had left Robin with a smile plastered to his face. Like always. He had dropped her by her house, and headed straight to his. He parked his car in the drive, like he always does and that's when it hit. It shot through him like lightning, every nerve lit up in his body and he couldn't breath. He gripped at the steering wheel, knuckles turning white. Gasps and chokes filled the car as he became overwhelmed by that feeling, the feeling that he wasn't safe. That he was alone and something bad was going to happen.

He sits there for what feels like eternity; but finally, finally he's catching his breath. But that feeling is still lingering, he doesn't want to be alone with it. He can't be alone.

So he starts up his car and he drives. He shouldn't be driving, not when he feels like his chest is going to cave in. But he drives, and by the time he realises where he's going he's standing by Billy's bed; as if he had been on autopilot.

Billy notices Steve's demeanour is off from the get go. He's playing with his fingers, and he smiles at Billy's joke; but it's small, half-hearted as if he's not actually sure what Billy said.

"Cat got your tongue pretty boy?" With a smirk Billy speaks again. And, then he's sure Steve's totally out of it. Because he looks confused. Looks spaced the fuck out.

"I-" Steve stops, he looks at Billy and shrugs. Panic explodes on his face and Billy's shuffling to sit up in his bed.

"Don't strain yourself. Sit down for fuck sake, you look like 'you're gonna pass out.'" Billy gestures to the chair and Steve staggers to it, trips over his own foot and then he's in the chair. He feels like his brain is malfunctioning. He can't seem to shake the feeling. The fear.

"Just talk to me. Just-" Steve's a stuttering mess. And, Billy's confused as hell.

But Billy talks, tells Steve about Eleven who visited earlier with Hopper; how they had watched the stupid channels on the hospital television and she asked about a million questions, how she had showed Billy she could change the channels with her mind. He spoke about this really annoying song the nurse kept singing all day, like all fucking day; “I swear I was about to fling myself out that window. It was so damn bad” he said and that did get a small smile from Steve.

It’s quiet after that, but Steve feels calm; well, calmer than he did about twenty minutes ago. He’s watching Billy, who had picked up the book from the table next to his bed. Steve had closed his eyes when Billy had run out of distractions. Billy’s voice had grounded him instantly. Steve didn’t say though, he didn’t want him to stop talking. He liked hearing Billy talk about stuff.

He was confused though. Because Billy had been able to ground him. To bring him back from that intense feeling of panic; and that was everything to Steve. Something that he had never let anyone do. But, he needed an anchor, something to pull him back from being swallowed by the darkness. He just didn’t ever think that anchor would be Billy.

3. "We got a deal?"

Billy thinks about Steve a lot. Like more often than he would like to admit. He feels warm around Steve. Happy. It's a weird feeling if he's honest, weird that he enjoys someone's company so much that he wants them around all the time.

He's noticed things about Steve. Things he never thought he would be on the right side of Steve to see. Like, how excited Steve gets when he talks about watching the kids; making sure they are all getting on okay. That warms Billy's heart the most he thinks, the way he tells Billy about Max and how amazing she is at skateboarding now, or how smart she is. He likes hearing she's doing good.

He watches Steve as he reads sometimes, Steve steals his books after he's done with them; he sits on the chair next to Billy's bed, furrowing his brow as he reads. His tongue poking out the side of his mouth. It's endearing to watch him concentrate so hard.

Steve only reads so Billy can talk about the books. He tries his best to understand, he really does. But, half the time he has no clue what the hell happened until Billy explains it; but he likes learning from him.

Steve's there for a lot of the bad shit as well, like almost all of it. He forces Billy to talk or listen on the days where everything is a little too overwhelming, and the pain burns more than it did the day before. But Steve's there and he tries his best to help Billy shake it off. Most of the time he can't shake it, but there are occasions where pretty boy has said some stupid shit and Billy can't help but laugh at him; lifting his mood a little bit each time.

He's there on his second week, when the nurse wants Billy to try and walk around the room. He's been cooped up in the bed so long his legs feel useless. And, he aches everywhere, it hurts so bad when he slides his legs off the bed; letting them dangle. But, he tries, he puts his feet to the floor and there's pain everywhere.

"You need to try, it'll get worse if you don't" The nurse had been nippy, and Billy wished she would just get the hell out of the room

and leave him in his stupid bed. But Steve, he's there and he stands from his chair. He gives the nurse an annoyed look "Let me help him instead". Billy's eyes widen, but Steve's already taken the nurse's place at his side, his arm now draping over Steve's shoulder.

"Let's try a few steps, okay?" He's smiling at Billy, and Billy tries. He tries for Steve. And, yea he doesn't get very far and it hurts like fuck but he makes five steps before it's all too much. Steve's helping him back to his bed and he's smiling.

"You did great. Like really, really great" Steve's smiling at him and Billy can't help the warm feeling in his chest. The feeling he gets everytime he see's Steve now. The feeling that hasn't gone away since that day.

"You just gonna stay here all the time, Harrington?" Billy's tired, like really fucking exhausted today. He comes across snappy, but Steve doesn't take it personally. Plus, he's been here since his little mishap in the car a few days ago. He had to literally beg the nurse to let him stay the last few nights. Since last time he stayed three nights and got his ass handed to him when the day shift nurses showed up.

"I sleep better here. Surprisingly" Steve speaks without thinking, his head snapping up to look at Billy. A grin is plastered on his tired face.

"Oh yeah? Your big house not cutting it for you anymore?" Billy smirks again but Steve looks sad now. Terrified. He holds his breath. Takes a minute. And he's shaking his head slowly. Billy can see the red creeping up his neck and the terror in those big brown eyes. And, Billy finally knows why Steve's sleeping here. It clicks all of a sudden. Steve's just as terrified as Billy is. Terrified it's not over, that the bad shit is gonna creep out and get them both again.

"You too, huh?" It's a weighted question; an understanding between them. They both know what Billy means. Steve's closing his eyes, tightly. And then he's shaking his head again. Eyes wide open now.

"I can't imagine how badly you feel about this all Billy. I-" There's a pause. Steve stares at Billy for a moment. And then he's talking again.

"I'm fucking terrified all the time. All the goddamn time." And Billy looks at Steve with sad eyes.

"I can't fucking sleep when I'm alone. I-i can't-" He can't finish the sentence. Panic whiplashes him. He can't fucking breathe again. He can't.

Billy's watching carefully, because he's pretty sure Steve's freaking out right now. He watches the way Steve pales, and the way he's pushing his hair back from his face.

And, that's when Steve feels that knot in his chest erupt even more. Terror spreads through his body and he's gasping for air.

"Wow, Steve. Hey, you're okay." It's hazy, and Steve can't understand what Billy's saying. But he looks up and his vision is blurry. He stands from the chair but he stumbles a bit, catching himself on Billy's hospital bed.

Billy reaches for Steve as soon as he's in his grasp. Pulling him to sit at the edge of his bed. He turns him to face him, as he tries his best to sit up from his position a bit more. It hurts. But he tries not to think about it too much.

"Steve. Breathe with me" Billy speaks but he knows Steve's too gone for it to get through to him. So he reaches up, placing his hands on each of Steve's shoulders. And Steve looks up in fear,

"Hey. You're okay." Steve looks at Billy and he still can't quite catch his breath. Steve grasps for Billy, his arms holding his biceps tightly once he gets ahold. He needs to steady himself; feel something real.

"Steve. Breathe with me" Billy inhales and exhales. And finally after what felt like forever Steve inhales. He copies Billy's breathing and the panic rolls off his body. Not fully, but enough for him to catch his breath. He's not sure how long they just sit like that. Neither of them letting go of one another. Billy aches from how he's sitting. But, he's terrified if he moves Steve would freak out again.

When Steve has seemed to have calmed, Billy is suddenly aware of how close they were. His hands still resting firmly on Steve's shoulders, Steve's gripping at Billy's biceps. Billy relishes in the touch, it's warm against his skin. It's the first time he's felt the feeling of Steve's hands against his skin. Not just over the horrid hospital gown. He wants to feel his hands all the time.

"Thank-thank you" Steve sounds totally fucked, totally totally out of it when he finally speaks. Billy can only nod in response before Steve's slouching back into the chair next to Billy's bed. Billy reluctantly lets him go, worried. But he does, and Steve stays that night. The nurse doesn't even argue. And, Steve's quiet, but he likes that Billy is close.

"So, that happen often?" Billy speaks first. Breaking this weird silence between them. Steve's gone and came back. Freshly showered and a change of clothes. He's been quiet still; he seems distant. Billy doesn't like it.

"Hmm?" Steve looks up from the book he has in his lap. The book he wasn't really reading anyways.

"Last Night. That happen often?" Billy's careful of how he asks, he doesn't want to trigger another panic attack from Steve. He wants to try his bed to keep it light.

"Oh." Steve grimaces, his voice sounding like a whisper but Billy hears.

"Y-yea. Yea. I-" Steve doesn't know how to continue and he's looking at Billy and he's shaking his head.

"You don't have to explain. I get it. Trust me, Harrington. I get it."

"Thanks for that. For y-you know, helping me out." He's embarrassed, and can feel the red creep on his cheeks.

“Wasn’t gonna leave you to sort it yourself, was I? That’s some serious shit Harrington.” Billy pauses “You talk to anyone about it?” Steve sighs at the question.

“No one knows. I mean. No one did know. Now you do” It’s vulnerable when Steve speaks; and Billy feels sick at the thought that no one else knows. That Steve has been keeping this to himself; dealing with the panic attacks himself.

“You didn’t think it was something you should get some help for?” It’s harsh. Billy doesn’t mean for it to be. But fuck is he worried.

“People have their own shit.” Billy freezes at that. Annoyed at how fucking selfless Steve is. Annoyed that Steve feels people’s shit is more important than his.

“How ‘bout we make a deal.” Billy’s concern fuels his words.

“Hmm?” Steve looks at him, doe eyed and sad looking. Billy smiles softly, and Billy pretends he doesn’t see the red wash over Steve’s face then.

“How ‘bout you tell me about your shit, and I’ll tell you about mine.” Steve is frozen, Billy’s eyes are on him, watching him. He doesn’t understand. He doesn’t get why Billy would want him to tell him about the shit bothering him.

“Billy. You don’t have to act like you want to know about it.”

“We got a deal, pretty boy?” Billy totally ignored what Steve said. And Steve looks confused. Unsure.

“Billy-” He pleads with Billy. Billy has enough of his own shit. So much shit that Steve couldn’t even compare. He’s not even in the same ballpark of shit that Billy will have to deal with.

“Do we got a deal?” His tone is harsh and Steve sighs defeatedly. He would argue. But he doesn’t feel like it would get him anywhere.

“Okay. We-we got a deal” They lock eyes. Warmth. It washes over them both. Steve feels confused, confused that Billy wants to help him. Wants to make sure he’s ok. And, Billy he smiles softly again at

Steve, the air grows thick and Steve feels overwhelmed by the feeling. Overwhelmed by Billy's eyes on him. He smiles back though, and he wants to say so much; he wants to tell Billy about his dreams, the terror. But, he doesn't; not yet anyway. Instead he slides the chair along closer to where Billy's head is. Billy looks at him confused. And, before Steve can even think about what he's doing, he's reaching for Billy's hand on the bed. Holding it softly.

Billy swallows, but he's tightening his grip around Steve's hand. A small squeeze to Steve's hand and then they just sit like that; for god knows how long but it's something neither of them want to go without. Something they needed.